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ABSTRACT

This simply written book for parents on their adolescent children examines the kinds of problems young people and their parents face, and it tries to stimulate understanding between the members of two very different generations. During this period the adolescent's physical and social concerns must be given attention. The adolescent needs to develop attitudes and skills that are necessary to make him a useful member of society. There are some common areas of conflict between parent and adolescent. The youngster may steal, cheat, or use drugs. A wise parent will resist the temptation to turn the adolescent out; rather, he will work to get him on the right track again. Adolescence is described as a time of preparation for the future. If a teenager's goals seem far beyond the parent's means, he must not be discouraged; there are opportunities for scholarships and work-study fellowships. He must be encouraged to speak his own mind about his choice of a career. (Author/RVJ)

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AN ADOLESCENT IN YOUR HOME

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FOREWORD

Gone are the baby years, and now your children have reached their teens. They no longer wake you in the middle of the night to tend them or depend on you for every mouthful they eat. They are big enough to do things for themselves.

All those years of patient care have earned you the right to a little rest. You may have looked forward to it.

Certainly, you have found that your adolescent can bring you much satisfaction. Teenagers are able to talk about adult matters. They have a sense of humor. They may go to work to help with family expenses. They can do a great deal around the house.

In so many ways, adolescents are good people to be with. But there is nothing *restful* about living in a household with youngsters of this age.

In this pamphlet we will take a look at some of the reasons why this is so; examine the kinds of problems young people and their parents usually face; and try to stimulate understanding between the members of two very different generations.

For simplicity, this book refers to all adolescents as "he." Don't be offended if your child is a girl!

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What Is Adolescence and When Does It Start?

First of all, it helps if you know just what adolescence is and when it can be expected to appear. It may best be described as a "process"—a series of rapid, noticeable changes—as well as a period in the young person's life beginning with puberty and ending somewhere between 19 and 21. There are no hard and fast rules to tell us when it starts or when it is over. But some time between the ages of 10 and 14, most boys and girls—each according to his own timetable—begin to become adults.

Having been through adolescence yourself and having observed much that is happening with youngsters in other families today, you may have a pretty good idea of what to expect from here on. Outward physical and personality changes will occur as your youngster grows from a wholly dependent child to an independent adult. A surge of new chemistry, new drives and emotions, will begin to race through your child's mind and body. These changes can affect his everyday functioning, providing him with highs and lows which swing him from cheerfulness through boredom and often down to real depression.

The Adolescent's Physical Concerns

The adolescent's body is changing in visible ways and becoming somewhat unfamiliar to him. Parents should recognize with tact and sensitivity their adolescent's concern—often unspoken—about his own physical development or lack of it. This matter seems to cause more pain to the late-developer than to one who matures early. A daughter, anxious to grow up, and still possessing a childish figure can be helped a lot by parents who mention her general good looks and give some time to her choice of clothes. A boy may need to be reassured that his build or physical development is in normal range.

It is important to give adolescents facts about what's happening. Of course, they can get the in-

formation out of books, but what they learn may not be nearly so important as being able to talk with a sympathetic adult about physical problems and the way they feel about themselves.

It's best, of course, if young people can have this information before an event takes place. Menstruation, for example, can be frightening to a girl if she doesn't know what it's all about. How this is handled by a parent can also have much to do with the way a girl feels about being a woman. Depending on the attitudes of her parents, she can see menstruation as a "curse" or as an exciting beginning to being grownup. Much the same holds true for boys—with nocturnal emissions (sometimes called "wet dreams") being a source of worry.

Young people may feel great concern about other parts of the natural growth process—acne, weight problems, failure of both testicles to drop for boys, irregularity or pain in menstruation for girls, to mention only a few. All of these bodily changes can place adolescents under real emotional stress and make them moody or hard to get along with. Your young person is mixed up and needs encouragement to seek the information that will permit him to be comfortable with his body. Medical advice may be necessary to clear up questions about which the parent has doubts.

Whether your youngster is over-developed or under-developed, his diet deserves your attention. What he eats has a real effect on his appearance, growth and good health—and studies show that adolescent nutrition is among the worst in the nation. Undoubtedly, he will feel pressured and bored when the subject comes up. He hears so much about it everywhere he turns. But it is important to ensure (without too much nagging) that he gets at least a couple of balanced meals every day. The best bet is to inform yourself about adolescent diet needs, set your table to meet them, and do your best to have him eat at home as often as possible.

The Adolescent's Social Concerns

If, in spite of these efforts, his development is not all you both want it to be, he may be having social difficulties as well. If he is too fat or too thin, too short or too tall, other young people can be giving him a lot of trouble about it. When children feel left out because of their level of development, they can use help in finding activities to interest them until they outgrow some of their physical problems (*individual* sports such as bowling, swimming or weightlifting; projects like sewing or wardrobe design; volunteer activities with handicapped children; day care programs, and so on might be suggested).

But social difficulties are not just related to outward physical development. They are all tied up with what is going on inside the adolescent's head. For example, boys and girls of this age are struggling to establish an acceptable sexual identity—learning what is involved in being a man or a woman and knowing how to manage lasting relationships with persons of the opposite sex.

Adolescent Peer Groups—If your teenager is deeply involved with a gang or group, don't be surprised. All adolescents feel a need to take comfort with people their own age, so teenage "peer groups" develop naturally. Because this has been going on for a long time and is likely to continue, parents should learn to live with such groups even if they don't like it too much.

Rule one is to take a careful look at the group and accept it if you can. You may find there is a lot of benefit to your child in belonging. Rule two is to encourage desirable activities and behavior within the group. Do whatever is possible to help maturity, individuality and freedom.

Helping adolescents to help themselves and each other is the best approach. Those who lecture to young people usually don't get very far. In the

adolescents' view adult advice that is pushed on them—when they haven't asked for it—isn't help at all. It just sounds like criticism and makes them feel less able than ever to deal with their own problems. But if you handle it carefully, you may be successful in stimulating their interest in a number of worthwhile activities. These could include competitive sports, service to others, rap sessions about community concerns, or job seeking efforts.

If the group your youngster has chosen is totally unacceptable to you and clearly is leading him in directions you don't want him to go, you may have to get him out of it. Sometimes the only way to do this is by removing him from the neighborhood altogether. While a step of this kind is not taken easily or lightly, it should not be presented as punishment but rather as opportunities to try something new in life.

For city youngsters, a period spent with relatives in a rural area may help to develop different interests—it may be that staying with family members in another school district will be helpful. If you believe a change of this kind is needed, be sure to make it early enough to have some effect on his habits before they become too firmly fixed.

Dating and Parties—Whether he is a loner or part of a crowd, your young person eventually will come face to face with the exciting and depressing ups and downs of adolescent love. "Dating" is an old-fashioned term for the relationship boys and girls establish with each other today. Instead of making dates, young people often go out with several of their own sex and meet friends at a favorite hangout. These hangouts include movie theaters, carry-out shops, coffee houses or the local community center. Boys may drop in at a girl's house or come home from school with her. Some activities, such as rock concerts and school dances are usually planned ahead of time. It is very common (but not necessarily desirable) for young people to go down to the

shopping center or a park area and just wait around until somebody shows up. As this is not vital to a young person's social life, parents who object can restrict evening wandering without too much sense of guilt. Friends unable to get together in this way usually will make contact eventually over the telephone.

Parents do well to encourage their adolescents to bring their friends to the house. Willingness to provide the food can make parent participation in party plans acceptable, but adults should involve themselves as little as possible—*staying at home*, but in the background, after a party begins. House rules about smoking, drinking, drugs, and "closing time" should be made clear in advance. It also should be understood that the party will stay where it began. When guests move on or take to the street, trouble may be brewing.

If your child is invited to another's house at night, you are certainly justified in knowing whether or not the parents will be at home, or in having your teenager notify you if he plans to go somewhere other than originally planned so that you will know where to reach him if necessary.

Attitudes About His Own Sexuality—No matter how closely you supervise, your adolescent will make his own decisions about his sex life (based largely on what his associates are doing) and you will find the opportunity to act on these decisions. The standards he has grown up with will affect his choice—teenage virgins still exist but their reasons for remaining so may be very different from those a generation ago. There no longer is much concern about a "bad reputation" among friends, fear of pregnancy, or even worry about adult disapproval. Many adolescents demonstrate a high degree of maturity about sex. They are interested in developing meaningful relationships and ask themselves about possible emotional or physical consequences of sexual experimentation. Parents should talk with

their children about these matters and work to encourage in them wholesome attitudes toward their own sexuality. Such conversations will include the legal and moral implications of sex activity and discussion about the young person's willingness to accept responsibilities for the well-being of his partner as well as the responsibilities that go with parenthood.

Young people should be fully informed about both sides of the sexual coin. You will want to insure, on the one hand, that he knows sex will play an important and satisfying part in his life, that it has great value in the most important relationships he will ever establish—those with his future family. He should know that the early drives he feels are powerful thrusts toward that family, but that these impulses can be held in check without bringing him harm today or threatening his sexual abilities tomorrow.

On the other hand, he should be advised that casual sex can bring with it some unpleasant penalties.

Sexual activity among adolescents does incur the risk of developing venereal disease. Your youngster should know that syphillis and gonorrhea are now present in epidemic proportions among the sexually active youth population of the United States. These are serious diseases that can harm the body, permanently impair the person's ability to have children, and sometimes cause death. If detected, these diseases must be treated immediately under competent medical supervision.

Also, despite the fact that fear of pregnancy is no longer the strong deterrent to sexual activity it once was, your teenager should know that pregnancy is still a possible consequence to sexual intercourse. No contraceptive is 100 percent effective, and there are those which have harmful side effects for some persons. Statistics tell us that there are many more complications of childbirth for women under age 20

than for those who are older—so teenage pregnancies do carry a much greater risk for both mothers and babies. Although abortion is now more widely discussed than ever before, it too carries a number of potentially serious consequences for the young person.

If you or your teenager need more information, or believe you need help with a sexual problem, don't hesitate to contact your doctor or the local public health agency.

Your Own Attitudes Affect Your Youngster

The adolescent needs to develop attitudes and skills that are necessary to make it as a useful member of society. This involves learning how to get along with people of all different ages and income levels, to be able to respond properly to the regulations that govern our lives.

The adolescent needs direction in understanding how to handle his feelings and behavior in those times when friends or family can't be there to support him—to be able to manage all alone if necessary and to like himself while he is doing it.

Finally, he knows he must plan ways to make his living. This leads him to ask questions about what kind of philosophy makes sense in today's world. Is it important to be able to get and hold a job? Or are there shortcuts to the good life? Can people make it without schooling or special training? How far out of his present way of life does he want to get and what is the best system either to keep what he has or to find something better?

Your attitudes about all of these things will go a long way toward shaping his. And sometimes parents haven't taken the time to examine these questions very well for themselves. It isn't unusual for parents to find that the trials of bringing up an adolescent can actually help older family members straighten out their own thinking. For example, you may become very disturbed if your child gets

into trouble at school or with the police—and then suddenly remember that he has seen you shave a few corners with the law. You may decide that he fights too much or is unpredictable with other people—and then realize that the home life you have provided has had continual ups and downs. If you haven't been a model parent, you can't make yourself over in a day or two. But you can sit down with him and explain your strengths and weaknesses. You can make sure he understands what kinds of things tend to produce unhappiness for you and give him a chance to learn from your mistakes. For the long haul, you can work to cut back on some of those activities which don't set a good example for him.

We begin to see the many problems teenagers present their parents with as very difficult issues to handle. Basically, of course, your job is understanding him as a whole person—the inside of him which you can't see as well as the outside which is so obvious. In trying to understand that inner person you have to come to grips with periods when he seems to tell you with every action that your caring and attention are the last things in the world he wants. Although he doesn't realize it, he needs you more than ever in this turbulent time in his life. If you recognize this and respond, you can find yourself dealing with someone who closes himself away from you, talks back to you and laughs at ideas you hold most dear. Try not to be hurt about this because what is coming across here is your child's mixed feelings about growing up. He wants the skills and the freedoms of adults, but isn't quite ready to give up the sheltering of childhood. He is showing his resentment about any resistance to his efforts to be grown up, but he is also irritated because he knows privately that he still needs to depend on you. If, in the middle of all this, he can get the idea that you have a real interest in his problems and that you are trying to accept

him as a changing new person, he may be able to give in a bit (and eventually even accept some of your advice).

To sum it all up—the best way for parents to get through adolescence is to understand that the *form* of their caring must change and that the requirements for successful parenthood are different now than those they faced when their children were little. It will help if you realize that this youngster is not pulling away from *you* but rather from the old, dependent relationship he has had with you. He is trying on roles and behavior patterns—almost the way he tries on new clothes—to find out which ones suit him best. Sensing that he can no longer be an extension of you, he is working to put together his own kind of person. But since most of this takes place in ways that he is not entirely clear about, he has trouble explaining it to you or even understanding it very well himself. Worse, the business of growing up takes place in fits and starts. One day he is the child you know very well, the next he is off on some typically adolescent detour. He may be very sensible one minute and make some very silly mistakes the next. You probably will be hard pressed to keep up with all the different sides he shows you and the feelings of like and dislike they create in you.

The bobbing around that he does makes it necessary for him to have some kind of rock to rest against when the whole business gets too tiring. If you have good, solid ideas that you know will benefit him, hold them out where he can see them. Offer them as choices to be seriously considered. He will test your ideas, pushing and fighting to see how much pressure they can take. It is up to you to hold firm but to avoid *forcing* your beliefs on him. In other words, you will be saying to him: These are my standards, they work well for me. Try them on to see if they fit in your world. I expect you to accept some, to change some, to pass up some alto-

gether, but I will not try to make you a carbon copy of me.

Holding firm, of course, does not mean that you will ignore the fact that some of the ideas you developed long ago may now be just dusty old relics. You may discover that your child is right in some area of conflict and you are wrong. If this occurs, admit it to him—promptly and freely—he will respect you all the more for it.

Areas of Conflict Between Parent and Adolescent

Now, what are some of the areas where conflict can take place? If your youngster already has reached his late teens, you probably are familiar with most of them—if you are just starting out with an early adolescent, much of what follows may be news to you.

There is very little a teenager finds in his environment which he will not try to sample at some time or another. He knows that most people do a great deal of good in their lives, that they have high standards of conduct, that they help one another. He will do some of all these things. He also knows that people lie, cheat, steal—that they fight, drink, use drugs, and break laws of household and community. He will do some of these things as well. When he makes choices from the first group, you will feel enormously proud of him, and when he dabbles in the second he may break your heart.

It you are a wise parent, you will keep him under your roof during the bad periods and work to get him on the right track again. Most of all, you will continue to respect him as a person and ask him to respect himself—in spite of his mistakes. Try to help him to accept responsibility for his own acts and for their consequences. Teach him to value his talents and to turn them to use for the benefit of himself and others. Help the young person to change for the better (he doesn't need to completely cast away his old self or become someone entirely different). Just

ask him to become more truly himself. If he feels respected and wanted as a valued member of the family, he usually can accept (and sometimes go beyond) your expectations of him. He can develop responsible behavior to carry him safely through many difficult areas of life. And, with his own feeling of self-worth increased, his respect for the worth of others will grow too.

Not Always Being Truthful—Of course, some of the choices he can make from that second list are less serious than others. For example, you can take it for granted that he will lie to you eventually—even if, as a child, you could trust him completely. This need be no great crisis. He may simply feel that you couldn't possibly understand something he does and it is easier to lie than to try to explain. However, he may be lying to cover up something really damaging which you should know about. So, the important thing is to open your eyes and avoid taking too much for granted. He needs to feel that you trust him, but it does him no good to believe that you can be had. Teenagers are entitled to privacy and parents should not pry. But if you listen carefully to him, if you put your common sense to work about his words and actions, you can end up with a pretty clear picture about what he is really doing.

As a rule adolescents do not communicate very well, but to the extent you are able, keep the conversational lines open. Be there when he is in a mood to talk and let him have the floor. All too often, a youngster begins to open up and his parents jump in with a lecture to stop him cold.

He may try to shock you with what he says. This generally happens when he feels you have been kidding yourself about how good he is. He does not necessarily want a bad opinion, but he may be trying to get you to look at him realistically. Sometimes this desire carries him too far and he comes out with statements that knock you flat. Try not to

react with shock; what he says may not be entirely true. Before responding allow yourself time to decide quietly what you really want to do about what you have been told.

On the other hand, your child may tell you nothing at all. If he fears your authority, he may be perfectly content to have you think he is a model of good conduct. If his behavior is very bad he will have to tell a lot of lies to cover up. In time you will see through them and when that happens, you may start to fear the worst and hear the worst in everything he says. At this point there is no benefit in deciding that you can never trust him again. You can help him more by indicating your disapproval and enforcing some appropriate punishment. Resolve to be more alert in the future, and, finally, let him know you are ready to start again with a clean slate.

Don't hang a label on him such as "thief," "delinquent," "maladjusted," "lazy," etc. Remember that in adolescence self-esteem is a crucial problem. Your young person doesn't have much experience on which to measure his own worth, and he is extremely sensitive to things people say to him at home. Adolescents don't have a supply of self-esteem to keep them going when they are humiliated. They cannot easily handle an attack on their dignity or worth—it causes resentment and, often, outright fear of the deepest kind. If you tell him he is a thief or a delinquent, he may believe it and get the idea he can never be anything else.

Quarrelling with Parents—Fighting, quarrelling, back-talk, or "sass" are means of adolescent communication which disturb parents everywhere. After long silent periods, your teenager may suddenly explode over "nothing" with a set of fireworks that disrupts the whole household. You may become angry, and the first thing you know, a full-fledged fight is in progress. It is best if these episodes do not become physical. Whether you are dealing with

a girl or a boy, your teenager is too big to be spanked, and it is not good for parents to wrestle around the house with any youngster. Make sure he understands that you are not going to hit him (he still is close enough to childhood to have this very much on his mind—he may even be planning to strike the first blow), but make it clear that you will take only so much argument. Control your own anger, try to be reasonable and move him toward better control of his. If you can turn the quarrel into a sensible discussion of both points of view, you have won a major victory. If this cannot be done, silence from you may help cool off the situation, allowing you to take up the question later when you both are calmer; make sure you don't just forget the problem, though, because it will only get worse. It may be best to stay out of view and leave him alone in the room until he is less agitated. Rage needs something to feed on; your anger may have been supplying it.

Running Away—It is possible that the line of communication becomes so closed, and feelings so intense, that your teenager may get the notion to run away from home. Find him as quickly as possible and bring him back. Whatever difficulties you may have at home, he is better off there than on his own in the streets. Limit your scolding. Show him that you were concerned for his safety and well-being, and that you are glad he has returned. Then be prepared to admit that there are serious problems underfoot and try to tackle them together. If you have never really had a heart-to-heart talk, now is the time to start one. Listen to him. Show him your love and concern by giving him nothing less than your own time and attention. He does not need a "pal;" he does need a parent who will discipline and love him through the good times and the bad.

It may be helpful to add a word right here about parents' feelings under stress. It is all well and good to say that mothers and fathers should always

be calm, wise, and in control of themselves. But things often don't work out that way. Sometimes the problems of daily living build up to the point where adults are ready to explode, too. Add to an already heavy load of responsibility, the pressures of coping with a difficult teenager, and the parent can find himself in a state of real fury most of the time. He may even want to throw the child permanently out of the house in order to achieve a little peace and quiet.

Parents should deal openly with these feelings, recognize that they have them and that they are natural. They should not be ashamed if they, too, sometimes go out of control.

Adolescents are mature enough to do a little understanding of their own and to realize that finding solutions is not always a one-way street leading from parent to child. They should be made aware of the headaches their parents deal with and take some responsibility for keeping things on an even keel at home. Most important, all members of the family should understand that parents often are entirely justified in becoming angry about certain kinds of behavior.

No matter how disgusted you become, it is generally best to deal with your feelings and his within the family structure. Don't throw him out and don't call the police if you can avoid it. Adolescents who go to jail usually come out with more problems than they had in the beginning. Sometimes, of course, emotional disturbances on both sides can become so severe that outside help is essential. Try to recognize this kind of situation before it reaches the point of crisis and bring it to the attention of your community family service agency or your doctor.

The Adolescent's Financial Needs

A great many quarrels erupt over money. A young person's financial condition can be very important to him. Adolescents are unsure of themselves and

continually in search of a sense of security in their new, almost-grown status. For many, money provides this. While some affluent youngsters often turn their backs on their parents' "dollar seeking," most realize that managing money is a valuable part of their developing independence. To be able to buy what they want when they want it can be far more important to young people than the *things* they actually purchase. Money also means status with friends and freedom from the embarrassment of mooching or the risk of stealing. For this reason, teenagers should receive every encouragement in their efforts to find work.

Many communities have well-organized youth employment services and young people should be helped to get in touch with them, or youngsters can check on their own with local businessmen. Both boys and girls can earn money babysitting and both now are being hired for paper routes. Adolescents without references will have more trouble finding jobs than those who have worked before. It sometimes makes a difference if a first employer is approached with a letter from school or church stressing the young person's honesty and dependability. Regardless of what he will wear on the job, he should appear for his employment interview neatly dressed and clean—no bare feet, muscle shirts, or open midriffs.

When he gets a job, he should be permitted to keep the largest share of his earnings, if it is mutually agreed upon by both parents and teenager. Many working teenagers, however, are willing to use their wages to relieve the family of the cost of their clothing and all personal expenses. They should be encouraged to open a savings account and regularly put aside a portion of their earnings.

If the adolescent is the oldest of several children, there may be a temptation to keep him at home to care for small brothers and sisters while his parents work. If this chore prevents him from taking a paying job, the arrangement can result in much

resentment and an undesirable situation for the children he is supervising. If he must work at home, it is best to arrange to pay him for his services.

The teenager who has no source of income whatsoever may try stealing to get for himself the things he needs or thinks he needs. If your youngster is "finding" a lot of things or shows up with merchandise he cannot afford, you will need to check this out with him at once. He should never be permitted to get the idea that you approve of stealing or that you don't care enough about what he does to ask where he got the things he brings home.

If your child is stealing, and continues to do so after arrangements have been made for him to have an income, and you have made your disapproval of that kind of behavior quite clear, you may be faced with something serious. Stealing can be a symptom of some other problem. Psychologists report that some stealing, for example, is associated with lack of love and represents a call for help. Drug abuse may be responsible, or your adolescent may be involved with anti-social gang activities. It is also possible that he is in one of those negative periods where nothing he does seems to be right at home or at school where he is getting criticism from everybody and praise from nobody—and where stealing has become a way of making him seem important to somebody. It is difficult to give advice about serious behavior problems like stealing, or other law-breaking acts, because there can be so many different causes.

The important thing is to do something about it early. If the usual punishments are not working, and you are simply not able to find out what the problem is by talking things out, then you should try to get some help. Many communities have a child guidance clinic, a mental health center, or a family service agency you can call. Some county public welfare or social service departments give this assistance, or your Community Chest or United Way of America may be able to direct you.

If Your Youngster Is on Drugs

If you believe your youngster is on drugs and you want to find help for him, there are several places in addition to the ones mentioned above. The Juvenile Division of your police precinct may put you in touch with a health service without asking your name, or there may be a "hotline" telephone number in your area which could give you information. If you locate a service which will help and get your adolescent's agreement to use it, go with him to keep his appointments. Let him know you are going along to give him your support and will stick by him through the treatment process.

Many teenagers know more facts about drugs than their parents. For sound, basic information you may wish to write to the National Clearinghouse for Drug Abuse Information, P.O. Box 1080, Washington, D.C. 20013.

If alcohol abuse is a problem in your household, you can contact the same people who work with drug users or you can reach someone at Alcoholics Anonymous 24 hours a day. This group has programs for teenagers as well as families of alcoholics. At AA, there is no charge for services—many of the drug programs also are cost free.

Although great strides are being made by public officials and neighborhood groups in combating hard drug use, heroin and amphetamines (speed) still stand as very great threats to young city residents. In suburban areas, sedatives (downers) and alcohol abuse are on the increase. While research is still underway to determine physical and psychological effects of marijuana smoking, most young people have concluded that it is harmless, and pot is widely used by both city and suburban adolescents.

If you make it a point to see your youngster frequently during the afternoon and evening, it should not be too difficult to find out if he is using drugs. Pot makes the eyes bloodshot and produces a droopy, relaxed look. It also creates an appetite. Downers produce just what their name suggests. Users be-

have drunkenly and then grow drowsy, often sleeping the drugs off for long periods. Speed acts in the opposite fashion—the user is filled with extra energy, moves quickly, talks rapidly and may have great difficulty falling asleep. LSD (acid), and others cause hallucinations along with strange or confused behavior. All of these drugs usually set off some degree of personality change. If, together with the above, you find your child more edgy than usual or defensive about some of his activities—or, on the other hand, if he becomes docile and disinterested, he may be taking drugs—the difficult job of finding out just what and how much is up to you.

Because young people know that all these drugs are illegal, they do a fine job of hiding them—at least until a habit becomes so far advanced that they no longer care. The odds are good that, if your child is in the early stages of drug use, you will not find evidence in his room. You may notice that he goes out for short periods more frequently than before or he may show unusual determination about getting to a party or to meet with his friends. Often, drugs are purchased in school and used there as well. In some cases, a student will show up at school long enough to make a buy and disappear for the rest of the day. For this reason his attendance patterns may give you some clues about possible drug involvement. However, it must be remembered that many students skip classes or drop out altogether for reasons having nothing to do with drugs. What you already know about your own child is the only useful guide in interpreting all these signs.

Adolescence Is a Time of Preparation for the Future

Adolescence is a time of preparation for the future—careless sexual experimentation should not be permitted to lessen opportunities to reach higher levels of education or create family responsibilities which block career goals. Searching for, and eventually selecting, the direction for future occupations

is an important part of each child's development and requires all the parental support possible. Most adults want more for their children than they have, but no parent should be ashamed of his own lack of education. Adolescents need to learn early that a person can bring dignity to even ordinary jobs and that every occupation has some drawbacks.

Don't be too surprised if your teenager mentally tries a number of career "hats," or if his enthusiasm about a chosen field one week becomes indifference the next. Help him find out as much as possible about career opportunities. The U.S. Department of Labor and other Federal agencies have many fine pamphlets to inform you. There are certain courses he should take to prepare for those careers which interest him. Science courses are required for future training to become a nurse, doctor, or medical technician. Mathematics courses are necessary for careers in accounting, computer programming and engineering. High school classes falling under the heading of "shop" can help prepare a young person for work as a carpenter, construction worker, or craftsman. Typing, of course, can be used in a wide variety of jobs.

If a teenager's goals seem far beyond your means in a time when advanced education is becoming so expensive, don't discourage him. There are more opportunities for scholarships, work fellowships and long-term student loans available now than ever before. Encourage your youngster to talk to his high school counselor about continuing his education and help him write for information from colleges and training centers with programs that interest him.

As you can see, there is much to keep parents of adolescents busy in the years ahead—we warned in the beginning of this pamphlet that it isn't very restful to live with teenagers. But adolescence *is* an exciting and challenging period; most important, it is also the last time you may have together. Enjoy the good periods and learn from the bad those

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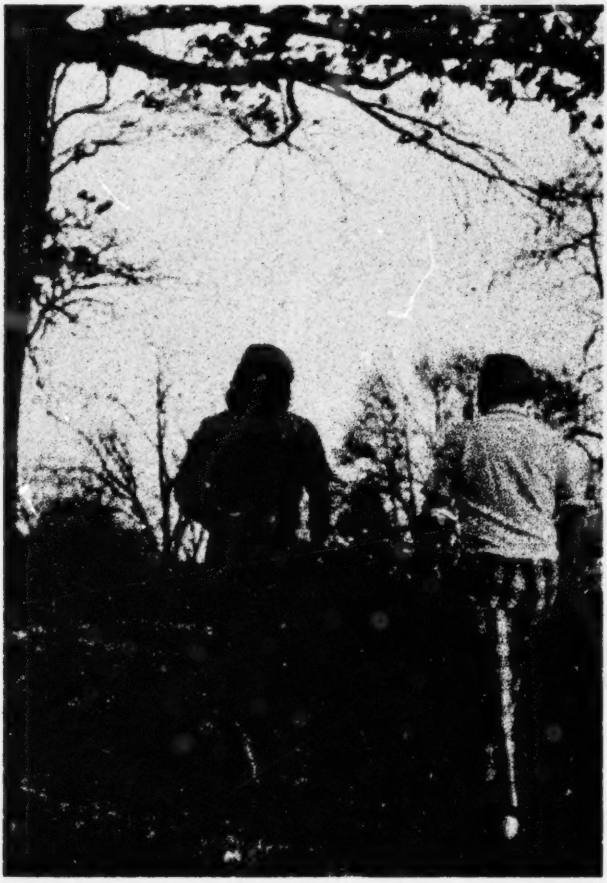

lessons which can strengthen your relationship with your youngster after he is grown.

When adolescence has passed, you will look at the mature man or woman you have produced and discover a whole new person—like you in some ways, unlike you in others. If you are lucky you may have found a loving—and lifelong—friend.